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S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D before the  
Q U E E N

At St. JAMES's,  
On SUNDAY, *April* the 17<sup>th</sup>. 1709.

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*Beveridge*  
By *W*ILLIAM Lord Bishop of St. Asaph.  
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L O N D O N,

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## St MATTH. xxvii. 24, 25.

*When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a Tumult was made, he took Water, and washed his Hands before the Multitude, saying, I am innocent of the Blood of this Just Person; See ye to it.*

*Then answered all the People, and said, His Blood be on Us, and on our Children.*

**I**T appears from these words, and from the other Evangelists, that Pilate had really taken some Pains, and used some Art, to deliver Jesus from the Persecution of the Priests, and the Rage of the People, who sought, he knew not why, his Death; or at least to acquit his Hands of him. He heard his Accusation, and found it frivolous, and therefore bad them — *take Him, and judge Him, according to their own Law,* John 18. 31. He examin'd himself this dangerous Criminal, and yet declared — *he found no fault in him,* even after he had own'd he was a King; Luke 23. 4. He put them in mind himself of the Custom they had, to have a Prisoner, whomsoever they desir'd, deliver'd to them at the Feast of the Passover, and would have had them chosen this Jesus, King of the Jews, to be the Man, John 18. 39. He puts Barabbas in Nomination with him, one that was a Murtherer and a Robber, in hopes ('tis likely) to determine them, by such an odious and abhorr'd Comparison, to pitch on Jesus. There were, no question, many Malefactors in their Prisons; Barabbas had many Accomplices that lay bound with him (Mark 15. 7.) for Insurrection; but he alone had committed Murther in that Insurrection; this Villain, above all, he fixes on, to see if that could move them to prefer Jesus of Nazareth to him, for the Prisoner that he must deliver. He took occasion of sending him

him to Herod, from hearing he was a Galilean, to rid his hands of him; and when that would not do, he again bespeaks the Rulers and the People, *Luke 23. 14.* *You have brought this Man unto me, as one that perverteth the People; and behold, I having examin'd him, before you, have found no fault in him, touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him, and lo, nothing worthy of Death is done unto him; I will therefore chastise him, and release him.* No Judge could shew more Marks of a Disposition to acquit a Prisoner, than Pilate here shewed; one may see him almost partial in the Matter; not against Justice, (for he knew *there was no cause of Death found in him, and knew besides they had deliver'd him for Envy*) but against the outrageous Clamours of the Priests and Multitude. 'Tis not unlikely, that his very Scourging him, was with a merciful Intention of sparing his Life: He would proceed to such a Punishment, to countenance their Accusation, or to appease their present Rage; thinking, it may be, they would now be satisfied, and in some little space of Time, relent, and fall from their violent Resolution of having him Crucified. He suffer'd Him to be crown'd with Thorns, and expos'd in a Purple Robe, and with a Reed for Sceptre, and to be treated with all the Scorn and Insolence, and cruel Contempt, that a Pretender to those Honours might expect from a mad Multitude, and Common-Soldiers, encourag'd to it by their Governors and Leaders. This Usage, and this Sight, he thought might satiate their Ill-nature, and move some Pity in them; and when he found it would not operate that way, but that they cried out the louder, *Crucify; he said, (what he should have remembred) Take ye him, and crucify him, for I find no fault in him:* But then they were more instant than before, and cried out, *Let him be Crucified.*

*When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a Tumult was made; when he saw, that all the artful Pains which he had taken, all the Excuses he had made, the Arguments he had us'd, the Diversions*

and Delays he had sought out, and the downright Denials he had given them ; — when he saw that nothing of all this would do, but that the Multitude was more incensed, and that instead of hearkning to him, and remitting somewhat of their Claim, they were rather like to force him from his hands, and fall into Sedition, and set the City in an Uproar, — he submitted to those Fears, that sometimes fall, in some degree, upon a brave and constant Man, that has to deal with Multitudes, — he yielded to the sad Necessity of giving up the Life of a private Person, to the Tranquillity and Safety (as he imagin'd) of the Publick : But, that he might do it with the better grace, — *He took Water, and washed his Hands before the Multitude, saying, — I am innocent of the Blood of this Just Person ; See ye to it.* He would intimate hereby, that as that Water cleansed his Hands from any Foulness they might have contracted ; so should the Protestation of the Force and Fear he was under, declare him Innocent, and acquit his Conscience of whatever Guilt might be contracted, by the Death of that Just Man, who stood before him, and whose Blood they resolved to have. He, for his part, declared him *Innocent*, and was willing to let Him go : They, by their Clamours, dreadful and importunate and threatening Tumult and Confusion, would not let him act, as Reason and Justice bid he should ; let it therefore lie on them ; let them, who, by their mutinous Rage, obstructed Justice, answer for it ; — *See ye to it.* There is therefore in these words, *First*, A Declaration of Christ's Innocence, and of his own ; and a throwing the Guilt of his Condemnation on the Priests and People, — *I am innocent of the Blood of this Just Person ; See ye to it.* *Secondly*, The Priests and People take this Guilt upon themselves, — *His Blood be on Us, and on our Children.* First, Pilate here acknowledges Christ's Innocence, in calling him a *Just Person*. Judas, who had attended on him during his Publick Ministry, came and acknowledg'd he had sinned, in betraying the *Innocent Blood*. Pilate's Wife had sent to him, when sitting in Judgment, to warn him from having any hand



hand in Punishing that *Just Man*; and now himself declares he was a *Just Person*. Thus St. Peter reminds the Jews, that *they denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a Murtherer to be granted to them*, Acts 3. 14. Thus St. Stephen tells them, — *they had slain them, which shewed before of the Coming of the Just One, of whom they had been the Betrayers and Murtherers*, Acts 7. 52. And thus saith Ananias to Saul, — *The God of our Fathers hath chosen Thee, that thou shouldst know his Will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the Voice of his Mouth*, chap. 22. 14. Pilate, 'tis likely, by *Just Person*, understood no more, than a Man that was innocent of the Crimes of which he was accused; but his Wife must use that word Providentially, and surely, by Divine Appointment, since you see, the Scripture-Writers use it so remarkably, and with particular distinction, as including the whole Character of *Christ*. And thus St. Peter; *Christ hath once suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God*. Nor did the *Malefactor* know how great a Truth he spoke, when he said of *Christ*, then dying by his Side, — *This Man hath done nothing amiss*: — Nor did he understand how necessary it was, that what he said, should be exactly true: He did not know his Neighbour-Cross was then the Altar, on which the Priest was Offering up Himself a Sacrifice to God, for the Sins of all Mankind: That this his Fellow-Sufferer was the *Lamb of God* (Spotless and Innocent) *that taketh away the Sins of the World*. And that such an *High-Priest* became us, was indeed not only fit, but absolutely necessary for us, *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners*; — not separate from them in his Life, for he Convers'd most freely with them, and came to call them to Repentance; nor separate from them in his Death, for *he was numbred with them*; but separated so, as never to be tainted or defiled with Sin. Such an *High-Priest* befitted our Condition; we stood in need of such an *Holy One*, to offer up such a Spotless Sacrifice, not for his own, but for our Sins, to propitiate God, procure our Pardon, to enter into Heaven, and there to make continual Intercession for us: which He

could not have done, had He, at any time, *done anything amiss*; had He not been, in all respects, what *Pilate* could but mean in *some*, — a *Just Person*.

But if He were thus *Just*, why will this Governour Condemn Him? How can he join these two things, — *I am innocent of the Blood of this Just Person*, when he is going to doom to Crucifixion that *Just Person*? If He be *Just*, why must He Die? If He must Die, tho' *Just*; how should the Man be *innocent*, who Condemns Him to Death? He *was* not innocent; his Declaration only shewed, he *would* be innocent if he could. A little would serve to wash his *Hands*; but all the Waters in the World could not clear his *Conscience* of all Guilt, who, being a Judge, would yield to the Clamours of an incens'd Multitude, and Condemn a Man he thought was *Innocent*, and could not forbear declaring so with all Solemnity. A Magistrate is certainly obliged, tho' under never-so-great Constraint and Fears, to do what he should do, were he at perfect liberty. This appears from hence, that a Man's Heart reproaches him with having prefer'd his own Security, against Justice, to that of an *Innocent Person*. He has sav'd himself, but he has lost another, whom he was certainly oblig'd to save: He has bought his own Security, at the Expence of another's Ruin; This he likes not; this he wishes had not pass'd. This is a hard Lesson to learn, to prefer another's Safety before our own; but they who undertake Great Offices, and to do Publick Justice, to right the Wrong'd, and to help the Oppress'd, must undertake them on these Hazards: They are not express-Conditions, but still imply'd, because the End of their Institution could not constantly be answer'd, without such Venture. But what must *Pilate* do in such Distress? Must he hazard, for the sake of a poor despis'd Stranger, the Peace and Quiet of his People, the Confusion of his Government, it may be, the Loss of it, and *Cæsar's* Favour, rather than yield to the united Desires of the Rulers and the People, to give that Stranger up? 'Tis easy for People that are at liberty,

berty, and unconcern'd, to sit at Home, and determine what is just and right, and fit to be done, and to pronounce decisively upon the Matter ; but 'tis another thing, to find one's self under Fears and great Constraint, encircled with Crouds of a mad enrag'd People, excited to Clamour and Importunity, by their leading Masters and Rulers, both Secular and Spiritual, whose Skill and Judgment they depend upon, and whose Authority is sacred with them. A firmer Man than *Pontius Pilate*, might, in such Circumstances, go aside out of the way of strict Justice, and be patient of submitting, to what his Conscience could not chuse or like, were he at liberty : His Case will therefore always meet with Pity, tho' with Blame also. The *Jews*, he had try'd upon more Occasions than one, were the most furious, obstinate, and mad Multitude he had ever seen, quickly provok'd, dispos'd to Mutiny, and ready to take Arms, and hard to be pleas'd and quell'd when up ; and he now saw them in a Disposition to Tumult the most forward, kindled into a strange Rage, and ready for Revolt upon their Leaders Call, which a little farther Provocation might endanger. And how could he answer that to *Cesar*, to endanger the Setting on Fire a whole Province, for the sake of a little Injustice, or keeping his Conscience quiet ? Would those Excuses do at *Rome* ? Would they not bid him learn of *Caiaphas*—*That it was expedient that one Man should die, rather than the whole Nation be endangered* ? I do not mean by this, to excuse this Man for complying with the unreasonable and wicked Importunities us'd with him, to condemn a Person whom he declar'd Just and Innocent ; for he should have ventur'd himself, in such a case : And if Governours and Magistrates should be intimidated by Threats and Clamours, or great Hazards, to do what a Croud of People should demand of them, without Regard to the Rules of Right and Just ; if they should not be oblig'd to undergo all Hardships, in executing their Offices, Every-body sees there would be an end of Order, Peace, and Government, and all Justice. If once the



Multitude could find their Decrees submitted to, either to the sparing, or taking away, the Lives of Men, they would never want Occasions of assembling; there would never be wanting wicked and designing People, to stir them, under-hand, to make their Claims, according as they found it to their Purpose; the greatest Criminals might go unpunish'd, and the greatest Innocence might not be safe. *Barabbas* here was to be pardon'd, and *Christ* must be condemn'd, only because the Multitude will have it so. These are the unavoidable Consequences of a Magistrate's yielding to the Clamours of a Rout, against his Rule, and against his Conscience; and if they have not oft appear'd, it is because the Magistrates have not often yielded; whenever they do, it will be so: And there can be no greater Demonstration of their Obligation to venture all Extremities, rather than condemn the Innocent, or acquit the Guilty, than the certainty of this Consequence, That without such Venture, the Multitude will always govern, and no Man could, tho' never so innocent, and deserving, call his Estate, or Liberty, or Life, his own. But this is also an equal Demonstration of the Excellence and Usefulness of Government, and that just and steady Magistrates do very well deserve the Honours and the Recompences that are bestow'd upon them.

Nothing can be of worser Consequence, either to Governors or Private People, than that the Assemblings of the Multitude for any Publick Purposes, should be encourag'd. The Noise of the Waves, and the Madness of the People, are alike dreadful, and alike dangerous, where they are let in; and deaf alike to all that you can offer. — *I find no Fault in this Man* — No matter what you find, let him be crucify'd. *Why, what Evil hath he done?* Then they redouble but their Cry — *Crucify him, crucify him.* Some cunning People have sometimes serv'd a present turn, by these Assemblings, and done no great Mischief; and when they are (as we call it) on our Side, we apprehend no Danger: But all the odds in the World are on the other



other Side ; nor can the wisest, the most artful, powerful, and most popular Managers, warrant Security and Quiet for an Hour, their Heads are so quickly turn'd, and their Passions rais'd so easily. They are therefore to be repress'd by all the Means imaginable, and the Men that practise on them, to be held in the greatest Suspicion : They should be treated like those who break up Damms, let in the Seas, and drown a Country.

The Rulers and the Priests, who stirr'd up the People to ask *Barabbas* and destroy *Jesus*, were certainly much more to blame than the People themselves, who made themselves their wicked Instruments : But the People were not without Fault, to be so stirr'd up : They have Reason, and common Sense, as well as their Betters ; and therefore shall answer to God for the Neglect or Abuse of it : They know they have nothing to do with Publick Matters ; they know they may not lie, nor accuse wrongfully, nor bear false-witness against their Neighbour, and yet they put themselves in the way of doing all these things, when they suffer themselves to be excited, by crafty and designing Men, to appear in Crouds, and publickly accuse, defame, and call for Justice, against Persons, that may, for ought they know, be innocent and blameless, and only traduc'd by common Fame and uncertain Rumours. What did these People know of Christ, our Lord, but what was worthy of their Love, Esteem, and Admiration ? That he taught Men to serve God, and love one another ; that he cur'd Diseases, heal'd Sicknesses, cast out Devils, and spent his publick Life *in going about and doing good* ? But because the Priests and Rulers were against him, persecuted him, and sought his Life, and told them I know not how many frightful Stories of the hazardous Condition their Church and State was in, and what a dangerous Man this *Jesus of Nazareth* was, and that Things could never possibly go well whilst He was suffer'd to preach and live — they swallow all, and joyn their Voices with their Leaders, and desire his Crucifixion ; altho' they

they knew themselves no harm of him, and heard the Roman Governor (who had no Interest in his Life and Safety) tell them again, and again — *he found no Fault in him.*

The Accusations of the Priests and Rulers would not have mov'd *Pilate*, 'tis likely, to condemn Christ, nor was it what the Multitude affirm'd or prov'd, that mov'd him; but 'twas the Rage, the Importunity, and the Madness of their Cries, that threatned Mutiny and Tumult and Confusion of all, that constrain'd this fearful Governor to give him up, even when he was determin'd to let him go. Shall not the People answer for this? Shall all this go for nothing? All this shall not excuse the Governor; but it shall make the People guilty, in part, of Christ's Blood. They should have had their Share of Guilt, had they not willingly cry'd out — *His Blood be upon us*; they drew it on themselves, by calling for his Death, because their Leaders bid them. See ye to it — will not excuse *Pilate*; but yet the People must see to it. I have (said *Judas* to the Priests) *betray'd the innocent Blood* — *What is that to us*, said the Priests to *Judas*, *See thou to that*. But yet it was to them, and a great deal too, to have encourag'd, dealt with, and agreed to hire, that treacherous Servant. Mistake not; all that have their Hands in Wickedness must See to it; but some have more, and some have lesser Share in it; but every-one too much by all, and every-one must answer for it. 'Tis not so easy to wash out Guilt, as to contract it, or excuse it lightly. *Pilate* may say — I was constrain'd, by Fears of Tumult and Disorders, that might possibly have occasion'd the Death of many People; but that will not excuse him, even to himself. The People may singly plead, They were but in the Croud, and did as others did, call'd out for Crucifixion, without Malice, but as they were bid. Our Saviour told *Pilate*, that He who had deliver'd him into his Hands, had the greater Sin; but He, it seems, had *some*; and therefore was not excus'd for yielding to the Importunities of the Priests and People, against his Conscience. Nor could the

the People be excus'd for calling for his Crucifixion, and putting that Force on *Pilate*. Thus Men bring Guilt on one another, but do not clear themselves. What therefore may be learn'd in general from hence, is, That as Magistrates, and such as undertake to do Justice, are to hazard their own Security, in order to discharge their Duty, and are not to be diverted from the right Way, by Hope or Fear, by Favour or Affection; nor will be excus'd by Threats and dreadful Apprehensions— So neither must the People be excited, by subtle and designing Men, to gather into Routs; nor, when they are there, be inspirited to meddle with Publick Matters, defame, complain of, or accuse, the Names that are put into their Heads, nor call for Justice, or Removal of they know not whom; for, however little Mischief they intend, they will be partly guilty, and partly answerable for what follows: They make themselves Instruments of mutinous, unjust, and cruel Spirits, and must give account, as far as they are concern'd in bringing their ill Designs to pass. There is nothing better for all Private People, than to study to be quiet, and do their own Business, and let the Publick Affairs be manag'd by those who are to look after them, and must be answerable for their Miscarriage. For see, *in the next Place*, into how great Mischief these poor People of the *Jews* were plung'd, by being so unnecessarily busy'd, and, under-hand, excited by their leading Masters this Day, *to destroy Jesus*. The Governor would fain have let him go; this they are bid to exclaim against most furiously; and when this would not do, He calls for Water, to wash his Hands of the Blood of that Just Person— and, in a very solemn manner, (since Guilt must lie somewhere) would lay it upon *them*, whose Importunity forc'd him, unwilling, to condemn him— *See ye to it*. This they immediately took upon them— *His Blood be upon Us and our Children*— The Guilt and Punishment be Ours, if there be any due to this Desire of his Crucifixion: Let Us, and our Posterity, bear the Smart, and bear the Burthen



Burthen of this Fault, if it be any. This was a great deal more than they intended, when either Zeal, or Idleness, or Curiosity, drew them out in the Morning : They came, 'tis probable, only to be Spectators of what would happen that Day ; but there, by Artifice, they were drawn in to be Petitioners, that Christ might die ; this they submitted to : And now, when *Pilate* would not be guilty of the Blood of One whom he thought innocent, they will needs substitute Themselves, and their Posterity, in his stead. This, you see, was plainly what they came not to engage in, but fell into, by a most unfortunate Opportunity, by being in Ill-Company, and in a Place where they had nothing to do. But what a strange and dreadful Imprecation was it ? Their Law had told them, God would certainly require the Blood of Innocent People at the Hands of those who shed it : And did the Man, whose Blood they were about to shed, appear as yet guilty ? They knew they had sought out Witnesses, and had suborn'd them to swear against him ; but, after all, their Witnesses did not agree, so that he could not legally be found guilty ; and every Man is innocent till he be legally found otherwise. What is it then, but *Murther*, to desire his Death, even when the Laws acquit him ? And yet these Rulers, who suborn'd these Witnesses (which yet could not come home) call for the Guilt of Blood upon Themselves and Children. Well, 'tis a fatal thing to engage at first in any bad Design ; for Men are usually so proud and stomachful, that they will stick at nothing, rather than that Design should be defeated, and their Credit lost : They will make good one *Calumny* by another, rather than be accounted *Liars* and *Defamers* : They will follow an *Accusation* with *Subornation*, rather than fall from their Point ; and are more careful of their Honour than their Conscience : They could not, at first, believe they should hazard so much, to bring about their Purposes ; but when they are once in, they will hazard all, rather than not go thro'.

But supposing the Priests and Rulers were truly persuaded,



suaded, that *Jesus* deserved, by their Law, to die, and so would take it on themselves, altho' they wanted legal Evidence; yet how could the Common-People be thus sure, that he deserved to die? and yet they take his Blood upon their Heads, as if they had, every Man of them, known him truly guilty. One may believe the Judge is uncorrupt, the Jury very honest, and the Witnesses true and faithful; and yet a Spectator would be loth to take the Blood of a Condemned Person upon his Head, for fear some Fraud, or some Mistake, might be committed. What madness is it, to concern ourselves in Cases that belong not to us? But why, of all things in the world, will Men engage their Children and Posterity in Curses, *upon Supposition*? Why will they venture, and desie, the Vengeance of God upon themselves and Children, upon the Certainty of the Guilt of a Person, whom neither Witnesses could *prove*, nor the Judge would *pronounce* — *Guilty*? Man is a Strange Creature, when enrag'd! — a Strange Creature, when under the Power of any Passion! He thinks of nothing but the present Inclination, whether to love, or hate; and he will gratifie it, at what expence or hazard soever. These People mean not certainly the Mischiefs that they imprecate, but only mean to be believ'd in what they then affirm: But they speak to One who hears; they call on God, who will not be so dealt with, but who will sometimes take them at their Word, and hear and grant those Prayers, that will undo them; but evermore with Justice: He will *visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate him*; and He will *shew mercy to thousands of them that love him, and keep his Commandments*. This is a plain Proof, that there is such a Relation betwixt one Generation and another, that Good or Evil is derived from One to the Other; *i. e.* Temporal Prosperity, or Misfortune, (for it touches not the Soul, we may be sure :) And both these things are for the Encouragement of Virtue and Religion, and grounded on that strong Affection Parents bear to Children, and to the inextinguishable Desires they have of doing them Good,

Good, and warding them from Mischief. You love your Children, and your Children's Children, and even as far as you can see, in Wishes ; and would do almost any-thing to procure their Welfare — Keep the Commands of God, and live virtuously, and walk holily before him, for *He shews Mercy to Thousands of them that love him, and keep his Commandments.* And if you would not bring Evil upon their Heads, nor cause them to be visited in Wrath, see that you live your Selves in all Obedience to his Laws — for *He will visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, of the Third and Fourth Generations of them that hate him.*

We may well presume upon the Justice of God in these Proceedings, without staying to speak to it now ; and therefore it need not seem strange, if God did really punish the Children of these enrag'd Petitioners for Christ's Death, as they desir'd, and deserv'd, he should. The sore Calamities That People endur'd for many Years, both before and after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, might, every Day, assure them that God heard the dreadful Imprecation of their Parents and Ancestors — *His Blood be on Us, and on our Children.* And truly, whoever will consider the Fortune of that poor People, from that unhappy Hour to this, throughout the World, will think that Cry is still, as it were, in God's Ears. They have been miserable beyond Expression : They have been for more than 1600 Years without City, without Temple, without High-Priest, without Sacrifice, without Prince ; scatter'd thro' all the Countries of the World, and low, depress'd, and in Subjection every-where. They own themselves, that they are under God's Displeasure ; but they see or acknowledge not the Cause. They are as obstinate, and fierce, and virulent, against the Name of Christ, as their Fore-fathers were against his Person : So that they vindicate the Justice of God's Inflictions, by continuing on the Cause ; and, by their outrageous Infidelity, will not let his Anger cease against them. They tread in their Fathers Steps : They are not only as wicked and immoral as they were, but, by continu'd Blasphemies and Impieties, still persecute and crucify the Son of God, and draw his Blood upon their Heads. They are the most inveterate Enemies of Christ, and his Religion, thro' the World. All People else are Enemies by Interest, and by Accident ; but the *Jews* by Principle and Choice. The Followers of *Mahomes* speak most respectfully of *Isa*, i. e. *Jesus*, and say that He shall save his Followers, if they are sincerely faithful and obedient to his Precepts (and he who shall say otherwise, says wrong :) The *Jews* blaspheme and curse his Sacred Name on all Occasions, not mentioning the same with Decency or Patience. Should we not reckon this one of the heaviest Curses that can fall upon them ? Is not his Blood most fearfully upon Them and their Children ? Let us learn at least from hence, not to give way to Rage, nor,

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in our Madness, involve our Children and Posterity in dreadful Curses and Misfortunes: Let every Generation bear its own Burthen; sufficient to the Day will be the Evil thereof. Our Sins will entitle them to enough of God's Vengeance, if he be not very merciful: *Remember not, Lord, our Iniquities, nor the Iniquities of our Fore-fathers, neither take thou Vengeance of them---* is what we ask daily of God. We must not therefore ask him, by our Imprecations, to remember us, in visiting our Children: But this we do, when we devote them to his Wrath, if such and such Things are not true, which yet perhaps are false, at least uncertain; or if we are not innocent, when perhaps our Hearts assure us we are guilty: But we will say these Things to serve some present turn, and save our Credit.

These Uses we may make of this Part of the Relation of our Saviour's Passion. Each Day of the following Week will furnish us with more and more Considerations of the like Nature: Nor can we use the Time and History better, than to consider the Particulars attentively, and make as proper Applications as we can, of each of them, to our own Condition.

Few People but approve of *Pilate's* Care and Purpose to acquit our Lord, because he thought Him innocent; and all condemn his falling from that Purpose, tho' under Force and Fear, and apprehensive of great Dangers. And who is there among us all, that has not made as honest and becoming Resolutions of discharging well his Duty, in this and that particular Occurrence; yet has not fainted upon Trial, yielded, if not to Fear, yet to some other Passion, that has over-born his Reason, and made him act against his settled Judgment? and yet has faintly try'd to wash his Hands in Innocency, by some poor Plea or other, in Excuse of what he did; that hardly satisfies himself, much less impartial Standers-by. As easily as we part with it, we are very much made for Innocence; we would have everybody think us in Possession of it; we are perpetually trying to recover it our selves, by fraying Excuses for what is past, that will, we think, diminish from the Guilt; and, I believe, whatever be the Purchase, we think we have given up too much for it. Hear the Conclusion of this Man. These very Jews, to whose outrageous Cryes he gave up Christ, within a few Years, complain'd of his Government to *Vitellius* then the President of Syria, who put him out, and sent him to Rome, to answer for his Misdemeanors. But before he reach'd that Place, *Tiberius Caesar* died, and his Successor sent him, by way of Banishment, to *Vienne* a City of France, upon the *Rhofne*; where he liv'd despised and miserable for five or six Years, and then dispatcht himself by his own Hands. I dare not venture to affirm how far the Divine Vengeance was concern'd, in pursuing this unhappy Man; but I dare venture to affirm, that had he follow'd but the Dictates of his Reason and Conscience,



Conscience, in releasing Christ, whom he thought innocent, the Accusations of the *Jews* of other Faults had been less burthen-som to his Mind; *Cesar's* Displeasure, and his Banishment, would have been born much better. Let but an Exil'd Man carry his Innocence, and a good Conscience, with him, and he will find his Native Country, Wife and Children, Friends and Comforts, wheresoever he shall go, *i. e.* He shall be happy in the Approbation of God above, and of his Heart within, which will be to him every thing he stands in need of.

To make an end — Whatever we think of *Pilate*, we are sure that we our selves, at least, are innocent of the Blood of this Just Person; and are amaz'd to think how dreadful a Curse these People laid themselves under, by calling for the Blood of Christ upon their Heads. But neither are we innocent our selves of the Blood of this Just Person, for they were certainly our Sins, the Sins of the World, that did not only want, but occasion, the Death of Christ. Nor do we less than call for the Blood of Christ upon our Heads, when we are impious and incredulous, and obdurately impenitent. The Scriptures speak of some, and Christians too, that *crucified the Son of God afresh, and put him to open Shame, that trod him under foot, counted the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, and did despite to the Spirit of Grace*, Heb. vi. 6. x. 29. when yet that Son of God was seated on his Throne in Heaven, out of the reach of Human Insolence and Injury. In a Word, That Blood will be upon our Heads, whether we call for it, or no, if (as the Scripture speaks) *our Hearts are not, before-hand, sprinkled with it, from an evil Conscience*, *i. e.* without a Figure, That precious Blood of Christ, which was shed upon the Cross, to merit and obtain Redemption and Forgiveness of our Sins, upon Discharge of the Conditions call'd for at our Hands, namely, our Faith, Repentance, and Amendment, will be so far from doing it, without Discharge of those Conditions, that it will raise our Guilt and Condemnation to the highest pitch, and make it much more tolerable for *Pilate*, and these Priests and Governours, and poor unhappy People, in the Day of Judgment, than for Us.

F I N I S.

**T**HE Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants, consider'd; in Sixteen Sermons: With Three more upon the Case of Self-murther. By *William Fleetwood*, now Lord Bishop of St. Asaph.





